THE

N.Z. HONEYBEE

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF BEEKEEPERS
EDITOR-MANAGER . . . P. A. HILLARY

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News of General Interest

Manawatu Branch

At the monthly meeting of the Manawatu branch of the N.B.A., Mr. F. J. Lewin presiding, it was decided that the October meeting be the concluding one of the winter season and that the subject of the lecture be "queen rearing." It was also resolved that during the summer months field days be held at the apiary. Mr. Lewin called for support for the projected district field day, which is to be held in March, 1939, and it was agreed that the committee meet in January to make arrangements for the gathering. Mr. R. S. Askew, who was to have given the address, was indisposed, and his talk was postponed until the next meeting. Mr. H. F. Dodson, the apiary instructor, spoke on swarm control methods, and outlined three of the more important measures which were used, namely, re-queening, brood manipulation, and the Demaree system. The address was followed by an interesting discussion as to the merits of the various methods, several members having tried each. The discussion proved very helpful.

At a previous meeting of the Branch, it was decided to lend assistance to the newly-formed branches at Marton and Levin, and to make arrangements for members to attend meetings of those branches. An interesting address on "Colony Strength and Spring Management," was given by Mr. H. F. Dodson, apiary instructor.

Levin Beekeepers

Beekeepers from the Levin district had a most successful meeting on July 13, when representatives from as far away as Paraparaumu were present.

Mr H. F. Dalton, Apiary Instructor, explained the possibilities of developing a spirit of real co-operation and unity among the beekeepers by the formation of a branch of the N.B. Association. A series of meetings attended regularly, rather than frequently, followed by field days in the summer, would improve the knowledge of members in all aspects of the industry. The Department of Agriculture would be pleased to work with the 'N.B.A." if the interests of beekeepers could be advanced.

Mr E. A. Field (Foxton), vice-president of the N.B.A., explained the aims and objects of the organisation.

After considerable discussion it was decided to meet again shortly and make a decision re forming a Levin branch. Mr Dodson's offer to give a lantern lecture in August was accepted.

Inserted By The Printer

"I eat my peas with honey;
I've done it all my life.
It makes the peas taste funny,
But it keeps them on the knife."

"I AM GLAD the N.Z. apiarists at last have their own bee journal and wish it every success. Subscription is enclosed."—L.W., Karaka.

Making Nuclei

To make nuclei without brood or drawn combs using only foundation, is possible for experienced beekeepers. The "Beekeepers' Item" explains the method.

The nucleus hives were filled with frames of foundation and a feeder which contained warm liquid honey. Bees were brought from an outapiary and a quantity given to each nucleus hive the same day, the entrance being closed for two days to prevent drifting of the bees.

The morning after making the nuclei, ripe queen cells were put in each one. The third day another feed was given, followed by another on the fifth day.

On the third day much of the foundation was drawn and the virgins were walking about, with the bees very contented at their task of building their combs. The queens came through with a very high percentage laying.

Thousands of nuclei were stocked in this manner, which proved that brood and drawn combs are not necessary to start nuclei.

Cheap Whitewash

Beekeepers often require a good cheap white whitewash to quickly paint up a shed or fence, or even hives. This one will not rub off: Slack four gallons of lime with boiling water, adding the water slowly and stirring constantly until a thin paste results. (If not well stirred and the water is added too rapidly the paste will be lumpy.) Then add water to bring it to the proper consistency for spraying or applying with a brush. Just before using add a handful of Portland cement and a teaspoonful of bluing. The cement is to make the whitewash adhere more strongly to the surface and the bluing counteracts the grayish colour of the cement, resulting in a snow white appearance when the whitewash is dry.—"Beekeepers' Item."

Marketing Sections

It is time something was being done in the matter of retailing sections. When I came to Tauranga, 4 years ago, most of the sections displayed in this town were disgraceful. An appeal to the A. and P. Association resulted in a display at the annual show of comb honey wrapped in cellophane. This was followed by an energetic canvas of the retailers who realised the value of properly wrapped sections, and it is now unusual to see any unwrapped sections displayed for sale. A rule of the A. and P. Show requires all exhibits of comb honey to be protected by glass or cellophane.—A. E. C., Tauranga.

Synthetic Honey

"The imports of honey are not increasing. Our colonial and foreign friends have experienced much unfair competition from the various brands of synthetic honey, some of which are said to contain a fair proportion of Empire honey. There is reason to think that the cheaper brands of genuine (imported) honey have suffered severely in this way. Here let it be stressed that we in Great Britain have a cordial respect for the higher grades of imported honey, when it is sold under its proper trade description.—H. J. Wadey, in "Scottish Beekeeper."

To Our Readers

There are many of our readers who are desirous of becoming subscribers to the N.Z. Honeybee, but who have been too busy during the season to give attention to the matter. Perhaps time will be found, now that the pressure of work is easing up, to secure a postal note for the subscription and send it along. Many beekeepers throughout New Zealand have not yet seen a copy of this Journal, and next month we shall cease sending free copies to 1,000 of our readers and forward these copies to new readers who have not yet received the N.Z. HONEYBEE.

"IT IS A WONDERFUL little book, and contains a wealth of information. Please accept my sub."—F.L.B., Palmerston N.

to blaze the trail in the early days, and they got bees and, unfortunately, they got foul brood. They did not know that it was foul brood, but it led to the decline of beekeeping and to the discredit of frame hives. Mr. Hopkins stuck to beekeeping and got an act through Parliament in the face of intense opposition and much ridicule. In 1906, they formed an Association in Christchurch and, with the Southland Association, passed resolutions in support of Mr. Hopkins. That act was not perfect, for in committee some person blundered and put in a big loophole. Mr. Hopkins was still determined, and got an amendment the following year, 1907. That showed how he stuck to a thng. Then came the 1908 act, whch made provision for the inspection of apiaries. Mr. Robert Gibb was the first inspector in the North Island, and he (the speaker), the first in the South Island. They had to blaze the trail in 1908, in getting rid of foul brood—it was real pioneering work. But for the work of Mr. Hopkins, big honey producers in those days would not have had a leg to stand on, and he had helped to lay the foundation of the industry they had to-day. But there were complications—there was no market for honey because people were not in the habit of buying honey. In 1909-10 they had a bumper crop, in Canterbury, no one could help getting a crop. He had never since seen a season like it. Honey sold at 2½d. a lb. Some carried over till the next year and then sold at 2½d a lb. It had been necessary to educate people to use more honey. From year to year, the industry had faced difficulties, but they were nothing in comparison to those faced by a few men like Mr. Hopkins who had the interests of the industry at heart till his last days. He was always writing and getting the ear of the newspapers and getting publicity in all sorts of ways; beekeepers of to-day enjoy the advantages of all that. Mr. Hopkins left his estate for the beekeepers of the future. He was a long-sighted man. He had heard Mr. Hopkins criticised, in that he never did any good for himself. He (the speaker), did not measure a man by the amount of money he made. Mr. Hopkins did not die a poor man. Some men had longer sight than others, and Mr. Hopkins was one of them. Beekeepers to-day, were enjoying the benefits of his far-sightedness.

The speaker wished to pay a tribute to Mr. T. W. Kirk, who was Director of Horticulture and who, though not a beekeeper, was sympathetic towards beekeepers. He had an ingratiating way, and was successful in managing people. Mr. Kirk put his heart and soul into what Mr. Hopkins wanted and, though his work did not appear much in public, beekeepers owed something to his memory. Those were some of the pioneers.

Mr. Bray joined with the remarks about Mr. Stewart. As the result of his labours, there was no necessity to go outside New Zealand for good bees. It was narrated that, as a boy, Mr. Stewart, when at church, stood by a window listening to the bees. People in the neighbourhood thought that he was a bit daft about bees, but, in later years, he was pleased to say, they reversed their opinion when they found that Mr. Stewart could make money out of bees. To-day, beekeeping was quite respectable, because they could drive round in cars, but in the days when he started, it was not quite respectable—beekeepers were thought to be a bit odd. (Laughter). To-day, they were living in much happier times.

Messrs Jacobsen and Ireland were great battlers for co-operation. In 1912, Canterbury beekeepers started exporting, a Christchurch firm, Montgomery and Co., having found a market, and next year Wright, Stephenson and Co., also exported. There was a company formed in Taranaki, and Canterbury beekeepers asked those connected with it to enlarge it and take them in; and they had been taken in. (Laughter). His remark should not be interpreted in the way it had been. The H.P.A. had done good, but many beekeepers let that organisation down. Things were going to be different now that the whole of New Zealand was going to run the industry. (Laughter).

Apiary Sites

(Continued)

By W. J. FIX

Meteorological Data

We have discovered that light soils, with mild summer rains, give good crops. If such country can be improved by irrigation it should prove worth while. In the past season the irrigation officers in Canterbury have taken some moisture tests, and have found that on silty loam the best growing moisture was 20 per cent; and on clay, or clayey loam, 30 per cent. Beekeepers have to decide on the best moisture percentage for nectar secretion, and have to take more note of the moisture content of the soil and also soil temperatures.

Providing Shelter

The matter of shelter occurs, and to what extent this should be carried out in districts exposed to strong winds. Artificial or live hedges grown or erected round the apiary boundary certainly enables the beekeeper to work even when conditions are not altogether favourable; but in Canterbury, famous for northwest winds, it is doubtful if shelter of this nature, especially in open country, is advisable. A well-sheltered location (where the hives are protected from all winds) suffers a tremendous loss of field bees during a spell of boisterous weather. A number of producers will support this statement. I am not condemning shelter, but in view of the vast variation in climate within the space of a few miles, the position is one that must be governed by locality.

If a district is well supplied with plantations, the bees are afforded some measure of protection after leaving the apiary, but if the country is open and subject to strong winds, the effect on the colony strength will be fully realised.

It must also be remembered, that what might be considered an ideal summer location, is not necessarily a good winter site. In this district, during the present month of June, apiaries protected from all winds and in such position that they get the maximum of sunshine, brood is being raised and stores consumed at an alarming rate. Thermometer readings taken late in May reached 70° F. in such locations, so if a hive temperature in the vicinity of 90° F. is necessary for brood raising, the result of shelter will soon be evident as far as the food supply is concerned. I have frequently found entirely different conditions in one apiary; certain colonies, partially shaded by overhanging trees, or perhaps subject to a cold wind, have been without brood, whereas others in more protected parts of the apiary maintain three or four frames; such a condition is costly to say the least of it, and is quite unnecessary if the apiary is stocked with established colonies.

Working Costs

Production or working costs also call for close attention, and as transport appears to account for the major portion, it is an item that must be kept in view. Good crops tend to make us somewhat careless in this direction, and I am confident that the expenditure under this heading is to a great extent, responsible for a number of failures. It is a very simple matter to arrive at costs, and as this is practically a standing charge each year, irrespective of the quantity of honey produced, it is not difficult to ascertain the value of each apiary to the business. I think that such a system would also bring about many changes.

Discussion

In reply to a question, Mr. Fix said that beekeepers had to think of conditions governing secretion. The reason for no honey flow was ground temperature, together with moisture content of the soil. The irrigation officers would help, and during the coming year intended to get information daily about temperature and

moisture content of the soil. This would be a guide to the right temperature and moisture required. There was a big field for inquiry.

Mr. Hillary said that Mr. Fix was on very sound lines and was doing valuable work. In other countries, a certain amount of research in this matter had been done, and especially in America. An attempt was made by him some time ago, to get records taken in New Zealand by the Meterological Department, but they did not have the proper instruments, and wanted to make a considerable charge, so the matter was dropped. With such information as that indicated by Mr. Fix, from different parts of the Dominion, it would be possible to announce the approximate date of the flow, and this would be most valuable to honey producers.

Mr. McArthur said that there were soil-testing stations all over the district, and the information obtained would be tabulated and carried out in the most elaborate manner by the Department. If they could work in with the Department, it might have a wonderful effect on the industry.

Mr. Irwin asked if the information given by Mr. Fix was confined to the districts in which irrigation projects were under way—that is, the Canterbury district.

Mr. Fix said that he was of the opinion that the information applied all over the district. They had to take into consideration rainfall and clover growth. They had country in Canterbury that seemed ideal for apiaries, but when tested, the honey was not there. In very dry seasons, irrigation was going to prove very valuable and with moisture, there would be a marvellous growth of clover. He thought the information about ground temperature and moisture content of the soil applied all over the country. It would assist the research if the irrigation officers took moisture and temperature tests. His aim was to get producers to take more interest in the country and arrange for their sites accordingly. A move of half-a-mile might have a great effect on the honey flow.

Mr. Bray said that he had known beekeepers in Canterbury who had consistently shifted their bees and had gone away from honey all the time. Beekeeping was very uncertain, and one only made a living by striking an average; no two seasons were alike. The 1909-10 season is the season that he would like to see again. Mr. Gibb had told him that the honey stuck to one's boots when they walked through the clover. (Laughter). Such seasons were experienced once in a lifetime. They had to take the thin with the thick—it was mostly thin. The only way they could average up was to keep some bees on each class of country, rather than go to one district. He knew that there was a lot in what Mr. Fix said. At one time, heavy dairying land had been considered the best for bees; it took him 20 years to find ou* that it was not; they were finding out that light land was the best.

A very hearty vote of thanks was accorded by acclamation to Mr. Fix for his valuable address.

The mover said that this was a case where they unanimously recognised the valuable work done by the instructors and its tremendous value to beekeepers.

Miscellaneous

When beekeepers leave a queen cell on a frame in a hive, a mark should be made with a crayon or pencil on the top of the topbar so that the frame will be readily found at next inspection, avoiding searching and damage to the cell.

Beekeeping Reminiscences—II.

No Bees at Meeting

Mr Davies, speaking on behalf of the South Auckland branch, said it was the second branch to be formed, and had applied to the Southland branch for a copy of its rules. The first meeting of the South Auckland branch was organised by Mr Isaac Hopkins. Mr Davis the then Mayor of Hamilton, consented to preside at the meeting provided that no bees were brought to it. Mr T. Pearson's father was the first President of the branch. About a dozen attended the meeting. Looking through the minutes some interesting things cropped up. About 1910 one of the members was threatened with legal proceedings. Looking through the minutes, marketing matters were prominent. The branch now was one of the largest in N.Z. There were 40 members, all large beekeepers; there were no small beekeepers in their district. The members resided over a large area. Twenty members attended a meeting recently and the distances they travelled averaged 50 miles. The members did not meet often; they held two or three meetings a year, unless there was something special to bring them togethe. He had been secretary of the branch just about 19 years. He had one more year to run and then he thought that he had done his share. Mr Hillary had been a member of the Control Board for six years, but now they had Mr Nelson as leader of the industry. The branch always had taken keen interest in the marketing of honey.

An Outstanding Beekeeper

Mr. Heron claimed that the West Otago district had a member who was well-known in the industry, and a very important figure in it—Mr. Robert Stewart (applause), who was one of the oldest beekeepers in the Dominion and one of the oldest members of the National. The speaker thought that the first frame hive had been produced by Mr. Stewart, who still had it in his possession. Mr. Stewart provided queens, and they all knew that if they didn't have good queens they would not have good bees. Mr. Stewart was the real backbone of the queen-rearing industry in New Zealand (applause). If anyone wanted something select to change over, he should send to Mr. Stewart for a queen. Mr. Stewart had done herculean service for beekeepers.

The West Otago branch was formed in 1922, just after the war. It was noted as the first branch to have a lady as President. During the slump, when the Government withdrew its grant for inspection, the West Otago branch was the first to put on its own men. There were two of them who, with the authority of the Department, covered the whole district and were financed by the branch. That was carried on for about four or five years. They were very enthusiastic beekeepers in that district.

A Young Branch

Mr. Swanson, representing the Gore Branch, stated that his branch was the youngest in the "National," being formed in 1935 with 14 members. The locality was a large one; from the Waimea Plains to the goldfields district, and was good beekeeping country with room for a lot of expansion.

The Pioneers

Tributes were paid to the Pioneers in the industry by Mr. E. A. Field, of Foxton, who represented the Manawatu Branch which had been formed in 1923.

Mr. Bray said that when he was first connected with beekeeping, Mr. Isaac Hopkins was the leading man in the industry, and to-day they were enjoying the benefits of the hard fight he put up. They were all living on one another and also on the past. Mr. Hopkins in his generation was more far-seeing than many, and saw the possibilities of beekeeping in the early days. The pioneers had

Work for the Month

By J. Unsworth.

Development of Colonies

By the time these notes appear, which is the later part of September, Brood-rearing will be going ahead at a rapid pace, swarming being as yet, some weeks off. The ealiest swarm may be expected from the 15th October onwards. The strongest colonies will have drones flying now, which is an indication that swarming is not far off.

It is advisable to maintain a careful watch, lest any colony run short of the 12 pounds minimum of honey as described last month, and feed those short as advised. A syrup may be made of best white cane sugar, two parts water to one part sugar, fed warm, immediately after sunset each evening. A breakfastcup full in a division board feeder to each colony should be ample.

There is, at this period of the year, a fair amount of fruit bloom, also willows. The osier, or basket willow, yields a fair amount of nectar. Apiaries that are adjacent to native forests, will be getting a fair amount of nectar from various shrubs and trees that are in bloom; all nectar gathered now, is required for brood-rearing.

Double Brood Chambers

Most commercial honey producers in New Zealand, winter their bees in two full depth Langstroth ten-frame hive bodies, otherwise known as a double brood chamber. In late summer, when removing the surplus honey, it will be found that the lower chamber contains chiefly brood, hence, a second body, which is chiefly honey, is left on top. During the colder winter months of June and July, the bees will, in most cases, have deserted the bottom chamber for the upper one, where most honey is, and which is also the warmest.

During September, the top box will be becoming crowded and the bees will be forced below, when it will not be long before the queen starts laying there; which is nature's way, the same way that bees in a tree work down as the weather gets warmer.

Single-storey hives are becoming cramped for room, the bees beginning to store both honey and pollen in the end frames against the sides of the hives and should have a full depth super of combs placed immediately underneath. A week later, remove the second frame from each side—they will probably contain brood or eggs—and place in the centre of the bottom chamber. When the queen has been laying in say, five frames in the bottom chamber, then place the top chamber on the bottom board, with the bottom chamber and its five frames of brood on top as a super.

Syrup Feeding

Should colonies become short of the 12lbs. of honey, which is the minimum of stores necessary to permit unchecked brood-rearing and thus ensure the colony developing efficient gathering strength for the honey flow, beekeepers must at once feed and continue to feed until the bees are able to store and cap incoming nectar from natural sources. The main flow begins about December 10th, and lasts for from four to six weeks.

The best type of feeder to use is the division-board feeder, although empty tins and even glass jars will serve if a quantity of stiff twigs or grass stalks or wire gauze is placed in each. Feed the syrup warm, made from best white A1 cane sugar, in the proportions of two cups of water to one cup of sugar. For stimulating brood-rearing, use three cups of water to one of sugar, fed warm in a slow feeder (a tin with a lid on, three or four holes being punched in the lid with a one-inch nail). Give each colony a cupful of syrup immediately after sunset; to feed earlier than this is liable to start serious robbing in the apiary, unless the utmost care and precautions are taken.

National Beekeepers' Assn. of New Zealand

An organisation for the Advancement of Beekeeping in New Zealand.

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